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Letter dated 1 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the Presidency of Nigeria, the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on "security sector reform: challenges and opportunities". The debate will be held on Monday, 28 April 2014, under the agenda item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". In order to help steer the discussion on the subject, Nigeria has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the annex thereto were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) U. Joy **Ogwu**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 1 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Nigeria's Presidency of the Security Council

"Security sector reform: challenges and opportunities"

Concept note on Security Council action

Security sector reform is increasingly recognized by Member States as an important vehicle for supporting the security and safety of the State and its people. The United Nations has made significant strides in strengthening the coherence and effectiveness of its support to security sector reform. Security sector reform has moved from being a little-known concept within the United Nations to becoming a core component of the Organization's engagement across peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development contexts. Key achievements include the development of technical guidance to improve the delivery of support; the establishment of specialized capacities for security sector reform in the field and at United Nations Headquarters; the enhancing of system-wide coherence and coordination, including through the collaborative efforts of the task force, whose membership has doubled from 7 to 14 in five years; and the forging of partnerships with both regional and subregional organizations, Member States, and civil society.

The second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform (A/67/970-S/2013/480), released in August 2013, recognizes the need to both learn from and build on these achievements. At the same time, while much progress has been made, the protracted conflicts, emerging threats and complex crises witnessed in the world today require innovative and flexible responses from the United Nations. There is a need to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in supporting security sector reform, as a key tool in the prevention and management of conflict. In this regard, the role of the Security Council is crucial in providing strategic guidance and in defining the institutional priorities of the United Nations.

Against this background, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, during its Presidency of the Security Council, in April 2014, will convene a high-level meeting on the issue of security sector reform. The objective will be to adopt a Security Council resolution that would signal the Council's commitment to further strengthen the important role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform. The meeting will build on the presidential statement that Nigeria sponsored in 2011, which called for an assessment of the United Nations approach to security sector reform, resulting in the second report of the Secretary-General on this topic. It will also seek to operationalize the recommendations contained in that report and, in particular, will identify challenges in their implementation in order to advance a series of practical steps designed to strengthen United Nations support to national and regional security sector reform processes. Council members are invited to participate at the Ministerial level. The Secretary-General and other high-level representatives of the United Nations system will be invited to provide briefings, along with a small number of other high-level invitees.

The present concept paper elaborates on a number of important questions related to the initiative:

- Why is security sector reform important?
- Why is security sector reform important to the Council?
- What is the added value of a Council resolution at this time?
- What are the issues that should be discussed in a debate in the Council in view of achieving an action-oriented resolution on security sector reform?

Why is security sector reform important?

Security is the bedrock upon which States are built. The security sector, comprising, among other things, defence, law enforcement, corrections, customs and oversight bodies, enables the State to extend public security and the rule of law within its territorial boundaries. From a prevention perspective, the absence of adequate management and oversight mechanisms often leads to predation, in which security institutions become a law unto themselves, threatening the very population they are entrusted to protect. The organized efforts of a desperate population often means resorting to arms in defence against predatory security institutions, leading to armed conflict within the country. In post-conflict contexts, security institutions are often weak and dysfunctional, ineffective in their impact and illegitimate in their foundation. Failure to address such operational and accountability deficits have often undermined the positive gains of peacekeeping and necessitated the return of peacekeeping missions to previous areas of operation. Security sector reform is therefore an avenue through which States are able to ensure that the security sector is accountable, effective and responsive to the needs of the population.[1] This is essential for ensuring the security of the State and its people (see A/67/970-S/2013/480).

A major and defining lesson of United Nations experience is that security sector reform goes beyond activities seeking to professionalize individual security pillars, such as the police, corrections, immigration, defence and civil emergency functions. In order for the process to be transformative and its impact sustainable, security sector reform extends to the security architecture as a whole. These sector-wide elements, which underpin the legitimacy and integrity of security institutions, include defining the strategic policy framework upon which security institutions are built, strengthening parliamentary oversight and engaging in dialogue to ensure a common national vision for the security sector. The purpose is to enhance the quality of security sector governance through a focus on accountability, inclusivity and effective management and oversight. The United Nations is increasingly providing assistance in this area, and in his second report on security sector reform (A/67/970-S/2013/480), the Secretary-General notes that the Organization "is particularly well positioned to support such reforms" and "may have a comparative advantage relative to other partners in providing sector-wide support".

[1] Security sector reform is defined as a process of "assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law" (A/62/659-S/2008/39, para. 17).

While security sector reform was initially introduced in the United Nations in the context of identifying peacekeeping exit strategies, this has evolved significantly. In his report, the Secretary-General recognizes that security sector reform is pertinent across the United Nations "peacekeeping, human rights, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and development agendas". For instance, security sector reform plays a key role in supporting peacebuilding by enabling the development of resilient and legitimate security institutions that are able to respond effectively to sources of insecurity.[2] Security sector reform has been a key peacebuilding priority for the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund in such countries as Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Burundi and the Central African Republic.[3] Security sector reform is also widely acknowledged to be an important element of conflict prevention. Ensuring effective governance and oversight of the security sector to mitigate its instrumentalization is a key conflict prevention mechanism (see S/PRST/2010/14).

Why is security sector reform important to the Council?

The Security Council has recognized in numerous presidential statements that security sector reform is a fundamental component of any approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and that it is critical to preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. Security sector reform is also of significant operational importance to the Council, as described below:

- Security sector reform is a key component of Security Council mission mandates. Illustratively, in 2013, 47 resolutions were adopted by the Council, of which 24 made explicit reference to security sector reform.[4] In 2008, there were a total of 14 references to security sector reform in Security Council resolutions; in 2012, the number had risen to 37 (see A/67/970-S/2013/480).
- Security sector reform is crucial to a large number of Security Council contexts. The references to security sector reform are found in the mandates of both peacekeeping and special political missions. Currently, six peacekeeping missions and eight special political missions and regional offices are mandated to provide security sector reform support to host Governments.[5] Security sector reform has been an important component for years in many peace operations and also holds a prominent place in many of the more recently established field

[2] By 2012, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund had supported projects related to security sector reform in 10 countries, constituting approximately $44 million, or 19 per cent of its total $228 million expenditure.

[3] "SSR and Peacebuilding: Thematic Review of Security Sector Reform (SSR) to Peacebuilding and the Role of the Peacebuilding Fund."

[4] The resolutions either explicitly mentioned the term "security sector reform", or similar terms such as "development of the security sector", "increasing the accountability of the security sector" or "building a legitimate, accountable and sustainable security sector".

[5] The peacekeeping missions include the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. The special political missions include the United Nations Office in Burundi, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. The regional offices include the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the United Nations Office for West Africa.

presences, such as those in Mali, South Sudan and Libya. Security sector reform is therefore an important topic for the Council and deserves further attention by its members, who are often seeking to be kept abreast of progress in security sector reform efforts in United Nations peacekeeping and political mission contexts.

- Security Council mandates are increasing not only in number but also in complexity in relation to the demands placed on support for security sector reform.[6] Across the missions, the United Nations has been called upon to provide support in a number of areas, from the development of national security strategies (e.g., in South Sudan), to support to harmonizing international coordination of security sector reform support (e.g., in Côte d'Ivoire) or encouraging and accelerating greater national ownership of security sector reform reforms (e.g., in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). There is a need, therefore, to reflect on how these increasing demands are able to be met by current United Nations capacity.

- The Secretary-General's report on security sector reform included a specific recommendation for the consideration of the Security Council. The implementation of Council mandates often depends on the extent to which they respond to national priorities and concerns. For this reason, one of the innovative recommendations in the second report of the Secretary-General is the need for the Council to consider prioritizing the early engagement of national stakeholders in the negotiations on resolutions related to security sector reform. This would merit a discussion among Council members.

What is the added value of a Council resolution at this time?

The Security Council has already discussed security sector reform in the context of three presidential statements adopted under the thematic heading of "maintenance of international peace and security" in 2007, 2008 and 2011. The statements have over the years represented important building blocks in the development of the security sector reform agenda. Some of the key messages that have been promoted are as follows:

- Security sector reform is a key element of stabilization and reconstruction in peacebuilding environments. The first presidential statement on security sector reform (S/PRST/2007/3) recognized its role in peacebuilding environments and requested the Secretary-General to produce a report, which was entitled "Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform" (A/62/659-S/2008/39).

- Security sector reform should take place within a broad framework of the rule of law. Another presidential statement supported the notion that security sector reform "must take place within a broad framework of the rule of law and should contribute to the overall strengthening of the United Nations rule of law activities" (S/PRST/2008/14).

[6] The Security Council made this observation in its presidential statement S/PRST/2011/19. This has also been recognized by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which recognizes since 2010 the increasing demands placed on the Security Sector Reform Unit in respect of supporting United Nations missions in the field (see A/64/19, A/65/19 and A/66/19).

- Security sector reform should build on regional frameworks and national ownership. The third presidential statement noted the "importance of regional frameworks as a foundation for multilateral security sector reform efforts". At the same time, it underlined the responsibility of States to "coordinate security sector reform support, including, but not limited to, establishing a strategic vision and the parameters for reform, identifying gaps and needs, prioritizing areas for technical support, and avoiding duplication of donor efforts" (S/PRST/2011/19).

The Security Council has therefore contributed to strengthening the United Nations approach to security sector reform through various presidential statements. The time is ripe for the first Council resolution on the topic, which would enable:

- Marking both the significant achievements made in shaping the approach of the United Nations to security sector reform and the positive contribution of the agenda towards the maintenance of international peace and security. A resolution would be commensurate to the importance of security sector reform as an issue of international peace and security, not only as a key element in multidimensional peacekeeping but also as a major ingredient in the entire peacebuilding continuum. Indeed, the comprehensive approach to security sector reform developed over the past few years has offered United Nations peace operations both a strategic tool to ensure that stabilization efforts lay the groundwork for viable institution-building and long-term capacity-building in support of national reform processes, thus contributing to peace and stability, and a sustainable exit strategy.

- Signalling a change in direction of the United Nations support to security sector reform. The United Nations has consolidated its engagement at the normative level, but the time is now ripe to implement many of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General that relate to the Organization's operational role. The report therefore marks a turning point for the United Nations. Within this evolving context, the United Nations, and in particular its task force and Security Sector Reform Unit, is being requested to strengthen their support to national efforts in the area of security sector reform. Reflection is needed on how the United Nations can provide for more coherent and operational support on the ground, which is consistent with its capacities and modest resources.

- Addressing current challenges to the work of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform processes. There are still a number of challenges that affect the ability of the United Nations to effectively support security sector reform. For example, there is an excessive focus on "hardware" issues relating to training and equipping the security sector compared with the efforts to enhance the delivery of "software"-related support, which would entail a stronger focus on democratic governance and management of the security sector. This is despite experiences that have shown that successful security sector reform processes need to move beyond activities aiming to "train and equip" uniformed personnel towards focusing more on the strategic priorities at the level of the entire security sector architecture. This relates to a fundamental challenge in developing a shared understanding of the concept of security sector reform; a resolution would be the appropriate instrument for communicating this understanding.

- Clarifying the comparative advantages of the United Nations in the area of security sector reform and its relationship to related areas. This includes emphasizing the important role of the United Nations in laying a solid foundation for reforms by strengthening the qualitative elements of security sector governance through a sector-wide approach to security sector reform. Similarly, there is also a growing acknowledgement that the Organization's engagement in security sector reform is both a distinct discipline based on the provision of specific expertise to efforts at the sector level, but also performs an integrative function, consisting of supporting coherence and coordination among United Nations actors engaged in this area. More efforts are required to reflect this understanding in practice. This includes defining the relationship between security sector reform and the rule of law and promoting the understanding that security sector reform is critical in contributing to the rule of law as the desired end state. The linkages between security sector reform and other related areas, such as small arms and light weapons control, also need to be further considered in order to enable the provision of more coherent and coordinated support.

The Security Council should therefore seize the opportunity to make a strong statement in support of the role of the United Nations in security sector reform through the adoption of a resolution. This would follow trends seen in other related areas of United Nations work, such as combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, on which the first resolution was adopted in September 2013 (resolution 2117 (2013)) after the issuance of a number of presidential statements by the Council.

What are the issues that should be discussed in a debate in the Council in view of achieving an action-oriented resolution on security sector reform?

In view of the elements put forward in the present paper, there are a number of key issues that would deserve to be addressed in an action-oriented Security Council resolution. These include:

- Strengthening the operationalization of national ownership of security sector reform. Member States have commended the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen national ownership, including through the development of an integrated technical guidance note on the topic. More effort is required to reflect on what operationalizing national ownership means in practice and to learn from experience in the field. In this context, the Security Council should consider how it can promote the embedding of the principle of national ownership in all mission mandates and relevant Council decisions.

- Supporting the prioritization of security sector reform in missions. Despite the numerous references to security sector reform in the mandates of peacekeeping and special political missions, it is often still granted a lower order of priority within mission structures when compared with the national interest in security sector reform and the complexity of the mandated mission tasks in many contexts. The Council could consider requesting the Secretary-General to impress upon his or her Special Representatives the importance of security sector reform in the conduct of their work, including through the use of senior staff in coordinating a comprehensive approach by the mission, thus ensuring a strong link between security sector reform and other practice areas of United

Nations engagement, including with respect to justice reform, governance reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, among others. Moreover, the important role of the good offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to move security sector reform processes forward at the strategic/political level should be encouraged.

- Clarifying understanding of the United Nations approach to security sector reform, including of its comparative advantages. Successful security sector reform is predicated on a combination of reform of individual components and sector-wide initiatives that address the strategic, policy and architectural framework of the sector. The United Nations often has a comparative advantage at the sector level. Additional attention should be given to enhancing coherence through a common understanding and appreciation of and approach to sector-wide and component-level reform, both within the Organization and with its bilateral and multilateral partners. This entails strengthening the understanding of and enhancing awareness of the Organization's role in security sector reform. For instance, enhanced focus is required on support to "software" rather than "hardware". Enhanced efforts to promote the understanding of the comparative advantages of the United Nations in sector-wide support and to clarify the relationship between security sector reform and other related processes, such as the rule of law, are also required.

- Strengthening the review of progress in security sector reform. Member States have underlined the importance of ensuring that United Nations delivery on the ground is enhanced, for instance, by reviewing progress and ensuring an appropriate focus on respect for the core principles of security sector reform. Moreover, the Secretary-General in his report called for an increased emphasis on the measurement of impact. This will require being innovative in monitoring and evaluation approaches in order to enable moving beyond the focus on measuring quantitative elements of security sector reform support to measuring qualitative aspects, which are often less visible but more important in indicating changes in peoples' lives.

- Strengthening United Nations capacity to deliver. Member States have widely commended the work and achievements of the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force. There is a need to reflect on how best to use the existing task force mechanism to implement the recommendations outlined in the second report of the Secretary-General. Many of these essentially depend on the ability of the Task Force and its secretariat to undertake them. However, this requires ensuring that the Task Force, and in particular its secretariat, has the resources needed to take on those important roles on the basis of a more sustainable and predictable approach to funding. The Security Council should reflect on how expectations and mandates can be matched with resources.

- Strengthening the "One United Nations system" approach. In 2007 the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force was instituted to assist in the delivery of security sector reform across the United Nations system — a philosophy known as "One United Nations". Integrated approaches to rule of law and security institution reform have been piloted for instance in the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, with the Security Sector Advisory and Coordination Division. Impetus at the Security Council level needs to be provided in order to foster enhanced mission and system-wide integration.

Charting a way forward on security sector reform

Security sector reform has grown to be a widely recognized element of the United Nations approach to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It is the responsibility of the Security Council, as the premier body in the areas of international peace and security, to ensure that the necessary priority be afforded to this critical role of the United Nations. The present paper has provided a brief overview of the landscape of security sector reform, how it relates to the work of the Security Council, the challenges of delivery and options for improvement. It is intended to lay the foundation for the adoption of a practically grounded resolution on security sector reform during the Nigerian Presidency of the Security Council, in April 2014.